

AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace the paragraph bridging pages 9 and 10 with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to FIG. 1, reference numeral 6 denotes a ~~[[sprit-shaped]]~~ strip-shaped member having a rectilinear V-shaped groove for accommodating therein an optical fiber 1; and 7 a gel substance as a filler filled in the V-shaped groove of the ~~[[sprit-shaped]]~~ strip-shaped member. The other substance other than the above is the same as that shown in FIG. 14, and so the same reference numerals are used and descriptions thereof will be omitted for brevity sake.

Please replace the paragraph on page 10, beginning at line 5, with the following amended paragraph:

As shown in FIG. 1, a gap is formed between the optical fiber 1 and a wall surface of the groove of the ~~[[sprit-shaped]]~~ strip-shaped member 6 such that the optical fiber 1 is not contacted with the wall surface of the groove of the ~~[[sprit-shaped]]~~ strip-shaped groove 6 in which the gel substance 7 is filled.

Please replace the paragraph on page 24, beginning at line 28, with the following amended paragraph:

While, in the preferred embodiments of the invention, the optical fiber holding device, the optical dispersion-equalizer, and the method of manufacturing the optical fiber holding device are give as an example, it should be understood by those skilled in the art that various modifications and changes may be made without departing from the ~~[[sprit]]~~ spirit and scope of the invention.